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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the current session of the Committee was starting at a time unlike any other in the history of the Organization and that difficult and responsible tasks lay ahead. Social problems continued to increase in spite of remarkable efforts made throughout the world. Today, more than a billion people, approximately one fifth of the world's population, lived in deplorable conditions of poverty. In the past, the United Nations had demonstrated that it could play an important role in the social field in spite of very limited staff and budgetary restraints.

2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stood together with the Charter of the United Nations as one of the great accomplishments of the twentieth century. The various international human rights instruments set forth in detail the obligations of Governments under the Charter as they pursued strategies for development and social progress. In accordance with the philosophy of the United Nations, economic, social and cultural rights were indivisible from civil and political rights. Respect for the rights of the individual should be at the core of all national, regional and international activities. With the end of the cold war, consideration should be given to what the Organization and each Member State must do to implement the Charter.

3. International peace and security, human rights and development were closely linked. Greater attention should be given to preventing problems involving conflicts and gross violations of human rights. More must be done to protect the rights of minorities, and international cooperation on human rights and humanitarian issues should be strengthened. In his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), the Secretary-General discussed the relationship between early warning and preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building and charted a new path for the Organization, drawing attention to the need to protect the rights of minorities and to the importance of preventive approaches in the human rights field.

4. An impressive quantity of information on human rights had already been submitted to the United Nations by Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals. The challenge was to use that information in order to gain a clearer understanding of complex situations and suggest appropriate action. The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 would be important in that regard.

5. It was imperative to strengthen United Nations protection for those whose human rights were in jeopardy or were being violated. He firmly believed in the importance of cooperative action on those issues and urged the members of the Committee to reflect upon them. A major priority of the United Nations was to promote development to ensure the realization of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights and the right to development. Experience showed that respect for human rights was essential in order to achieve development. Consideration should be given to further steps to improve the integration of human rights in development.

(The Chairman)

6. Problems relating to the enjoyment of minority rights were at the root of many conflicts in the world. For the first time since its establishment, the Organization would be considering a declaration on minority rights. Thought should be given to ways to promote its implementation. The Commission on Human Rights or its Subcommission might need to establish a working group to ensure protection of such rights.

7. Every year the General Assembly or the Commission on Human Rights urged States that had not yet done so to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocols. Nevertheless, several dozen Member States had not yet ratified those instruments. The Committee could look into the possibility of increasing the number of ratifications during the current session of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General rightly placed great importance on enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of human rights. The regional groups could consult among themselves in order to determine whether measures might be taken, by consensus, to promote further progress in the various regions. He intended to invite representatives of the regional human rights organizations to address the Committee in order to familiarize it with their work.

8. More must be done to enhance implementation of the rights of women and children. The preparatory work for the 1995 World Conference on Women was an important occasion to promote the rights of women and compliance with the standards laid down in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been ratified by a record number of States in a very short period of time, the basic survival needs of millions of children were still not provided for.

9. The Committee should consider what it should do to develop preventive action in the social, humanitarian and human rights field. The Secretary-General could be requested to commission a report from a distinguished group of experts on preventive strategies. Such a report might help the Committee in considering its role and that of the Organization in preventing social and humanitarian problems. Member States should consider the question of changing United Nations policies and programmes to meet their own needs better; consultations would lead to an evolving agenda for future cooperation and United Nations activities in the social and humanitarian fields. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and the proposed world summit for social development were major events which required serious work in the weeks to come. By acting flexibly and with a sense of political responsibility, the Committee would be able to take the necessary decisions at the current session.

10. In addition to considering social and humanitarian questions, Committee members should also demonstrate their personal commitment to alleviating the suffering of people all over the world. Accordingly, he suggested that every

(The Chairman)

delegation should find ways to contribute to a Third Committee fund for that purpose. At the end of the current session, the Committee would contribute half of the amount collected to support emergency relief efforts in Somalia, where people were in urgent need of food and medical supplies. The other half should be used to support United Nations programmes for disabled persons. If the Committee agreed to that suggestion, a fund-raising committee would be established to promote the idea and help to implement it.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

11. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development) said that world living standards had become far more disparate than even a decade earlier. Although some 77 per cent of the world's population lived in developing countries, they produced and consumed no more than 17 per cent of the world's output. Consequently, poverty was primarily a feature of developing countries. While there had been higher rates of economic growth in China, India and Indonesia, the living standards of the poor had deteriorated in virtually the whole of Africa and a good part of Latin America. Accordingly, poverty eradication continued to be a major global concern which should be addressed urgently through concerted action to ensure growth and sustainable development.

12. Another aspect of the glaring inequalities in the world economy was that women were still far from positions where they could compete with men on an equal footing. Women were grossly under-represented in the labour force, in advanced scientific endeavours, and in the higher levels of legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. The deliberations in the Third Committee and the Economic and Social Council had had a genuinely catalytic effect in the advancement of women throughout the world, including the integration of women in development. He hoped that the discussions at the current session would play an important role in the preparations for the 1995 World Conference on Women, to be held in China.

13. Since the early successes in reducing mortality in developing countries had not been matched by reductions in fertility, the labour force in those countries had grown rapidly during the past two decades. It was estimated that some 740 million people in the developing world were unemployed or engaged in low productive employment. Sub-Saharan economies would need some 6 million new employment opportunities in the 1990s. The most urgent economic and social problems in Africa and Asia were linked to providing productive employment, which was the most constructive way to reduce poverty. Consideration should also be given to the social consequences of population ageing. All those issues would be addressed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and it was hoped that the Committee would contribute to the preparations for the Conference.

14. One of the strongest factors inducing migration across boundaries was the search for employment. The phenomenon was not new, but until about 1960 the flow of workers had gone from the developed to the developing countries. Rapid demographic change and political and economic upheavals in Eastern

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Europe had changed the picture completely, however. Until developing countries and economies in transition could provide adequate employment, migration to the prosperous North would continue. Therefore, investment in developing and transitional economies must rise substantially to create job opportunities.

15. The dramatic political changes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had led to severe social and environmental problems. In a context of rapid economic development those problems could have been taken in stride, but far-reaching transformations in the fundamental economic and social institutions of those countries had compounded them. The speed with which their economies could prosper and their societies could provide adequate social safety nets would depend on successful international cooperation.

16. Some migrants were fleeing natural disasters such as the persistent drought in Africa. Investment in infrastructure, research and extension services could, however, prevent such natural disasters from becoming large-scale human tragedies. Another major group who crossed frontiers were refugees fleeing man-made disasters: civil war or ethnic and religious conflict. One of the most frightening features of the past five years had been the problem of refugees within their own countries. There were no easy solutions to such conflicts among peoples who had lived together for centuries in seeming harmony, but greater tolerance was one ingredient.

17. Among major policy concerns, first was the need to raise the volume of savings in the world economy and to divert a substantially larger portion of it to investment in developing countries, both to mitigate natural disasters and to create productive employment. Reduction in military budgets of both developed and developing countries in order to release substantial resources was of paramount importance. Regarding aid transfers, it was encouraging that several donor countries had achieved and even surpassed the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance, and some countries had agreed at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development to achieve that target by the year 2000. Yet much remained to be done.

18. Second, Governments should be more accountable and should bear major responsibility in promoting social progress. While the private sector could play a key role, an enlightened Government was essential in order to establish an adequate framework for operation of a market, enhance human resources, provide physical infrastructure and ensure income distribution rewarding individual effort without excessive inequality.

19. The third major policy concern was the economic and social dimension of the United Nations strategy for preventive diplomacy and peace-building, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). Political and security considerations must be integrated with economic development, social progress and respect for human rights. Consequently,

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strengthening the analytical capacity of the Unitsd Nations in the economic and social sector would help it to implement its crucial responsibility to monitor economic and social trends which might emerge as sources of political instability, social unrest or economic upheaval. Such an early-warning function would aid in attaining the inseparable objectives of global peace, development and justice.

20. Regarding the problem of narcotic drugs, the four major solutions often proposed included reduction of demand through education and rehabilitation, interception of trafficking and prosecution of those involved, crop eradication and destruction of factories for drug manufacture, and the introduction of crop substitution programmes. The major emphasis thus far had been on interception of drug traffic and punishment of offenders, but as long as the demand remained strong, enforcement of laws against trafficking and consumption was unlikely to solve the problem. As more resources were allocated to law enforcement at the expense of efforts to reduce demand, the growing demand would surely be met with adequate supply, unless a viable economic alternative was provided by giving top priority to crop substitution and agricultural development.

21. Another dire threat to economic and social development was the rapid spread of the AIDS pandemic. Ten years earlier, that disease had been perceived as affecting mostly young homosexuals and intravenous drug users in the northern hemisphere. Currently, the vast majority of infected people were in developing countries, and the economic and social costs to those countries were enormous. Unless it allocated more resources, the international community would make little progress in that area.

22. The items on the agenda of the Third Committee were all interconnected issues in the larger context of the world economy and society. While the attention of the international community had been focused on selected political and economic questions, global social problems had reached a boiling point. Indeed, the review of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its July 1992 session showed an enormous gap between the aims of the international community and the actual outcome. Eradication of poverty and hunger, human resource development, reduction in population growth and sustainable development were priorities of the strategy. Against that background, the proposal for a world summit for social development was highly relevant. Much could be achieved at such a meeting, and the consideration of that item in the Committee would surely lead to a productive summit.

23. At the recent high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the theme "Enhancing international cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system", the objectives of securing peace, development and justice mandated by the United Nations Charter were seen as indivisible and equally essential. Therefore, an integrated approach to development should be ensured in order to restore economic growth and social

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progress worldwide through enhanced international cooperation. He hoped that the Third Committee would make an important contribution towards achieving that goal.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

24. The CHAIRMAN said that, for the offices of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, the Group of African States had proposed Mr. Jallow (Gambia), and the Group of Eastern European States had proposed Mr. Dekany (Hungary).

25. Mr. Jallow (Gambia) and Mr. Dekany (Hungary) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Srivihok (Thailand) had been proposed by the Group of Asian States for the office of Rapporteur.

27. Mr. Srivihok (Thailand) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/47/250, A/47/251 and Add.1; A/C.3/47/1, A/C.3/47/L.1 and Add.1)

28. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the report of the General Committee (A/47/250) and the recommendations concerning the organization of the session contained in section II, which had been approved by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting. The recommendations of particular concern to the Committee included the prompt start of meetings (para. 8), and the waiver of the requirement of the presence of one quarter of the members to declare a meeting open (para. 9). Regarding explanations of vote, the General Assembly had reaffirmed paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of its decision 34/401 (A/47/250, para. 13). Furthermore, the General Assembly had once again decided that statements made in a Main Committee should not be reproduced in extenso (para. 16). It had also reaffirmed paragraph 17 of decision 34/401 (A/47/250, para. 17), dispensing with the practice of making concluding statements, except for statements by the presiding officer.

29. He drew attention to paragraphs 20 and 21 of document A/47/250, on questions related to the programme budget. He also reminded the Committee that the General Assembly (A/47/250, para. 7) had decided to recess the forty-seventh session not later than Friday, 18 December 1992 and close on Monday, 20 September 1993.

30. He announced that the meeting would be suspended to enable the Committee to meet informally in order to consider the suggested programme of work (A/C.3/47/L.1, annex I).

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

31. The CHAIRMAN said that the suggested timetable in document A/C.3/47/L.1, annex I, should be respected as much as possible in order to make the best use of services, and drew attention to the measures for the rationalization of the work of the Third Committee contained in annex II to that document. He also drew attention to document A/C.3/47/L.1/Add.1 on the state of preparation of documentation, and said that he would keep the Committee informed of any new developments in that regard.

32. Mr. DEKANY (Hungary) asked the Chairman whether the second report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia provided for in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/S-1/1 would be presented to the Committee at the current session.

33. The CHAIRMAN replied that he had been informed by the Centre for Human Rights that the Special Rapporteur intended to go to the territory of the former Yugoslavia in early October 1992 and would present an updated report in time to be considered by the Committee at the current session.

34. He said he took it that the Committee approved the programme of work for the session contained in document A/C.3/47/L.1 as revised during the informal meeting.

35. It was so decided.

36. The CHAIRMAN said he also took it that the Committee wished to extend invitations to the various special rapporteurs/representatives to present their reports to the Third Committee at the current session.

37. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.